Christopher Priest

A Dream of Wessex

"... a fine exciting novel – SF if you want a label, but an enrichment not only of the sub-genre but the whole genre too." C. J. Driver in the *Guardian*

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and coming in Spring '79

An Infinite Summer

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Published by **Faber & Faber**

3 Queen Square, London WC1, England

novacon 9

Organised by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

2nd-3rd-4th November 1979 **Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham**

PROGRESS REPORT 1 (and 2!)

MARCH 1979

Welcome to the year of the conventions.....not so many years ago there was one convention per year held in Britain. In 1971 the figure doubled when NOVACON started. A few years later Faancon started...then Silicon...then STAR TREK conventions...fantasy conventions... DR WHO conventions...film conventions - all held in England. Last year, Scotland joined in and this year they are taking on 2 conventions. I doubt that anyone could afford all these cons even if they could find out all the info on them - I've already lost track of how many cons there are in the UK this year! We also have the World SF Convention being held in the UK this year - an event that has grown so big and doesn't look like easing off - 5 months to go and the memberships still pouring in.
With an event as big and as important as the WorldCon, it is obvious that other conventions will suffer slightly as regards attendance and we expect that NOVACON will have a much reduced attendance this year - something that we, the Birmingham SF Group, think could be a Good Thing. The 'bigger and better' attitude doesn't work with conventions. Small cons are generally better than large ones and it was with this attitude in mind that we decided to return to the Royal Angus Hotel for NOVACON 9. The Angus was the site for NOVACONS 5,6 & 7 - the last one being so cramped that we moved away last year. One of Birmingham's newest hotels, the Angus can sleep 222 guests with all bedrooms having their own bathroom, shower, radio and TV. The convention facilities are not ideal (the art room being tucked away in a small room in the basement) but it does have the advantage that the other rooms - the Con Hall, Lounge, bar, book room, restaurant are all on one floor and we understand that alterations to be made this summer will improve these facilities.

ROOM RATES

Room rates for NOVACON 9 are as follows:-

Sharing a twin or double room	- £8.50 per person
Single room	- £10.50
Sharing a triple room	- £7.50 per person

These rates are per night and include full English breakfast, service charge and VAT at 8%. Should the VAT rate increase, the room rate will be increased accordingly.

DATES AND TIMES

NOVACON 9 will take place over the first weekend in November - from the 2nd to 4th. It will commence on Friday afternoon (as opposed to Friday evening in previous years) and will run through to about 4pm on the Sunday. The general timing of programme will be much the same as in previous years with the exception of the Saturday evening - we will not be having a banquet. We are hoping to completely change the expected Saturday evening schedule - possibly run the afternoon programme through till about 7.30 and then have a fancy dress/buffet/disco much later.

GUEST-OF-HONOUR

G-o-H at NOVACON 9 will be 2 people - world-famous author CHRISTOPHER PRIEST and long-time fan and con-goer Christopher Priest (for further explanation of this split identity please refer to DEADLOSS-1). It is not often that a convention committee can get their pro G-o-H and fan G-o-H for the price of one, but in this case we have both wrapped up in one slim, long-haired bundle!
Seriously, though, we think it is long overdue for Chris to be Guest of Honour - the

high quality of his writing is setting a standard in the science fiction field that few other writers can ever hope to achieve. 5 novels published to date and each one better than its predecessor - INDOCTRINAIRE, FUGUE FOR A DARKENING ISLAND, INVERTED WORLD, THE SPACE MACHINE (recently serialised on BBC radio) and his latest A DREAM OF WESSEX. A second collection of short stories (the first being REAL TIME WORLD) will be published by Faber this summer.

YOUR COMMITTEE

As in previous NOVACON committees we have the usual mixture of old hands and newcomers to convention organising. In the chair is yours truly, Rog Peyton - definitely an old hand! Ably supported by Stan & Helen Eling who will be handling the Treasury Dept. and all the registration/hotel booking side of things. Hoping to inject new life into the programme is Chris Morgan, a newcomer to con organising, though no newcomer to conventions. He will be supported by his wife Pauline (formerly Pauline E Dungate, chairman of NOVACON 2). The other newcomer is Paul Oldroyd who is hoping to learn all about convention organising so that we can twist his arm into being chairman of NOVACON 10!

Supporting memberships, if not already paid, should be sent to Stan Eling, 124 Galton Rd., Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 5JS. All other correspondence should be sent to Rog Peyton, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 8OL.

THE NOVA AWARD

The Nova Award is presented annually by the Birmingham SF Group to the editor of the fanzine voted 'Best of the Year'. The Award was started in 1973 and past winners are:-

1973 SPECULATION edited by Peter Weston
1974 (tie) BIG SCAB edited by John Brosnan and ZIMRI edited by Lisa Conesa
1975 MAYA edited by Rob Jackson
1976 MAYA edited by Rob Jackson
1977 TWLL-DU edited by Dave Langford
1978 GROSS ENCOUNTERS edited by Alan Dorey

NOVACON 9 WEST

2-4 Nov 1979 - The Turf Inn, Albany, NY

GoH: Bob Shaw * Fan GoH: Jack Cohen

Toastmaster: Wilson 'Bob' Tucker

Special Guests: Marion Zimmer Bradley, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Jim Barker...

The first British SF Convention this side of the Atlantic since prior to 1776!!!

Hucksters Room, Fancy Dress Parade, Room Parties, Banquet, Art Show, Films, Blood Drive and lots more!!!

REGISTRATION*
$5.00 through 5th Nov. 78
$7.50 through 16th April 79
$10.00 through 15th Oct. 79
$15.00 thereafter and at the door

Banquet - $7.00; $10.50 after 15th Oct. 79

Rooms : 1 Person - $28; 2 - $32; 3 - $36; 4 - $40

Hucksters Tables : 1 - $10; 2 - $30; 3 - $60; 4 - $100

* Registration is FREE for holders of UK or EIRE passports, SFWA members and other recognised professionals

Information: P.O. Box 428, Latham, NY 12110, USA

The Award is of a different design each year and since 1974 has been designed and made by Ray Bradbury. Once again Ray has offered to make the 1979 Nova Award. ((Good on yer, kid!))
The new rules for the Nova Award are now far too lengthy to reproduce completely here but anyone wanting a copy of the rules may have one merely by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope (large) to Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks., RG2 7PW.

WHAT IS NOVACON?

In the past there has been a lot of confusion as to what NOVACON is, who it is run by, etc., and this is as good a place as any to clear up the confusion in some minds. NOVACON was the brainchild of Vernon Brown way back in 1970. It was organised by a group of people who either worked at or who were studying at the University of Aston in Birmingham. The first NOVACON was intended to be a one-off convention in 1971, held in November (hence NOVACON). It was so successful that it was decided to run it annually and the organisation was transferred to the Birmingham SF Group which had then recently reformed after a break of about 4-5 years. There are actually two SF groups here in Birmingham, the Birmingham SF Group (popularly known as the Brum Group) and there is the Birmingham University SF Group. After NOVACON 2's success, the organisation of NOVACONs was entered into the BSFG's Constitution, the main points of which are:-

1 NOVACON will be held annually in the Midlands.
2 The Chairman of NOVACON must be a member of the BSFG and is appointed by the committee of the Group.
3 The committee of a NOVACON is a sub-committee of the Group, the chairman automatically holding a place on the main committee and is expected to attend Group committee meetings as well as all NOVACON sub-committee meetings.
4 No bidding is necessary or allowed for NOVACON sites, etc.

The BSFG committee consists of 6 members, 5 of which are elected at our AGM in January, the 6th being the NOVACON chairman appointed by the previous year's committee. This usually means about 20 committee meetings in one year for the NOVACON chairman!!! From this organisation you will gather that the BSFG needs about 10-12 willing hands each year for the two committees, and this is the reason we try to get at least one new person on each committee each year. It's also probably the reason that no fanzines come out of Brum - there just ain't time!!! We have found one loophole that has proved useful...as long as the NOVACON chairman is a BSFG member of long-standing, the NOVACON committee need not live in the Birmingham area. While most of you out there are wondering about NOVACON 9, minds here are already at work planning NOVACON 10!

With knowledge of the above you will understand why we were very surprised about two years ago to receive a letter from Jan Howard Finder saying he intended 'bidding' for NOVACON 8 and hold it in the USA. After explaining the rules of NOVACON to Jan we decided that it would be possible to hold a NOVACON in the USA at the same time as the real NOVACON here in Birmingham. By the time this was sorted out it was too late to organise a NOVACON in the USA at the same time as NOVACON 8 over here, so Jan is holding NOVACON 9 WEST in New York. This is a special one-off event and will not be repeated in future years. Guest of Honour in New York will be Bob Shaw and Fan GoH is Birmingham's own Jack Cohen. It is hoped to organise some form of link-up between NOVACON 9 and NOVACON 9 WEST but what form that link-up will take has yet to be decided. In the meantime please remember there is only one NOVACON 9 and we are not NOVACON 9 EAST. The New York con has nothing to do with the Brum Group, the Nova Award or any of the other financial obligations that this con has. It is purely Jan Howard Finder's baby.

THE ALL-MOVING, ALL-TALKING PICTURE SHOW!

Choosing films for a convention is always dicey - in previous years the Brum Group have always had a film at their Christmas Party meeting and with one exception the BBC or ITV have shown the film we've chosen in the month prior to the Party. By then it is too late to change the film. Con-organisers have to book early - at present there is renewed interest in SF films and early booking is essential. Most of the best SF films will doubtless be shown at the WorldCon this August so selecting films for NOVACON 9 was doubly difficult. I'm pleased to say that the films we selected were, with one exception, still available and we now have the films booked. They will be:

ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP

57 Summer Row Birmingham B3 1JJ

Tel: (021) 236 1112

THE WORKS OF CHRISTOPHER PRIEST
AVAILABLE THROUGH MAIL ORDER

INDOCTRINAIRE - new revised edition.	Paperback	90p
FUGUE FOR A DARKENING ISLAND	Hardcover (First Edition)	£2.15
	Paperback	85p
INVERTED WORLD	Hardcover (First Edition)	£2.90
	Paperback	£1.00
THE SPACE MACHINE	Hardcover (First Edition)	£3.90
	Paperback	£1.10
A DREAM OF WESSEX	Hardcover (First Edition)	£4.90
	Paperback	90p

ANTICIPATIONS - edited by Priest. A collection of new short stories by Aldiss, Ballard, Disch, Harrison, Priest, Shaw, Sheckley and Watson.
Hardcover (First Edition) £5.00

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE

Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for a copy of our mail-order catalogue - lists of new books issued at 6-weekly intervals. Lists of second-hand and out-of-print titles also available. Ask for a copy.

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Simply a better way to pay

CREDIT CARDS - We are now able to accept payment by ACCESS (including EUROCARD and MASTERCHARGE) and BARCLAYCARD/VISA. When ordering by mail state that you wish to pay by credit card, quote your card number and your full name as it appears on your card. Do NOT send your card through the post. We will send the normal top copy receipt with the invoice and the goods.

BARCLAYCARD
VISA

1 MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH - a British film from 1946 directed by Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger, and starring David Niven. One I personally have not seen and as far as I know has never been shown at a British con - certainly not since 1964 when I started attending cons. From what I hear, it seems to be an excellent film in black and white with the fantasy sequences in colour.

2 YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN - an American film from 1974 directed by Mel Brooks - again I've not seen this one but I did see Brooks' BLAZING SADDLES. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is supposed to do for the horror film what BLAZING SADDLES did for the western!

3 DOC SAVAGE - MAN OF BRONZE. Michael Anderson/George Pal film of the invincible superhero, made in 1975. This was shown at Silicon 1 and proved to be very popular. A must for all those who like their films with extra dialogue from the audience!

4 INCIDENT AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE. Short film made in France in 1961 and based on a story by Ambrose Bierce. This has been shown at cons before but it is so good we decided to include it.

The disappointment was that one short film was totally unavailable - Ed Emshwiller's underground film RELATIVITY. Although listed as available, the only copy in this country had recently been destroyed. At least we understand it was the only copy - we will make enquiries to see if anyone else owns a copy but there seems little chance.

A 'different' programme with no robots, spaceships or hardware but we hope that you will agree it is an interesting selection.

Gerald Bishop ('Ye Gerbish') has agreed to act as projectionist and we've booked two projectors so that films may be run continuously without breaks between reels.

FANCY DRESS COMPETITION

A few years ago, Fancy Dress parades were dropped at NOVACON in the hope that everyone would support the Fancy Dress at Easter conventions. It doesn't seem to have happened. The Easter conventions still have a moderately supported Fancy Dress but the number of entries have not risen drastically. So due to popular demand we've decided to bring back the NOVACON Fancy Dress....with BIG prizes! So now is the time to start planning your costume. Remember that it must be science fiction, fantasy or horror - anything classified as 'imaginitive'. It can even be a costume you've used at a previous convention.

SCIENCE FICTION UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

The 'Quiz' seems to have become a traditional item at cons. At a recent committee meeting, we discussed the whole idea of quizzes and decided that it might be a good idea to have some form of continuity by having an annual challenge - run along the same lines as the TV programme UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE. Teams could enter, each team having some form of link - all members from one local group, for instance. The competition would be of the knockout type leading up to a Grand Final. If successful and sufficiently popular, eliminating rounds could be held at other conventions during the year. But for this year it is at NOVACON 9 only. What we want are entries - teams to be of three people who must be linked in some way (all from one area, all members of a local group, etc). Anyone interested in entering a team should send details to me, Rog Peyton, at the address shown elsewhere in this PR. All questions will be on science fiction or fantasy (not fandom). Buzzers, flashing lights, slides, questions, etc are already in production. All we need are the entrants!

ADVERTISING RATES

We will be taking advertisements for PR 3 and 4. PR 3 will be out in July and will contain the hotel booking forms. Deadline for copy will be JULY 1st. PR4 will be out early October - deadline for copy is SEPTEMBER 15th.

Advertising rates are:-

Professional	£12 per page	- part pages pro rata.
Fan	£7 per page	- part pages pro rata.

All copy to be supplied camera ready (size A4) suitable for reduction to A5. Half tones, reversing out, bleed offs, etc will be charged extra at printer's rates plus 20%.

All copy to be sent to Rog Peyton, c/o ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP, 57 Summer Row, Birmingham, B3 1JJ. Please note that this address is for advertising copy only - there will be far less chance of damage. The postman at my home address is likely to fold anything large and flat! Publishers wishing to discuss advertising may also contact me at the shop - phone (021) 236 1112.

Details for advertising in the Programme Book will be given as soon as we have a printer lined up.

ARE YOU REGISTERED FOR NOVACON 9?

This PR is going out to all those who registered for NOVACON 8 plus those who have already registered for NOVACON 9. If your name is not included in the list below and you wish to receive further PRs, you should register immediately. Supporting membership of NOVACON 9 is £2 per person and entitles you to all future progress reports and a copy of the programme book should you not attend the convention itself. There will be a further charge for attending membership which will be payable nearer to the convention. Last year the extra was a further £2 making a total of £4 for Attending Members. This year we promise a maximum of £4 - we are hoping to be able to reduce the cost this year but the amount by which we reduce cannot be decided at this early stage.

1 CHRISTOPHER PRIEST
2
3 Rog Peyton
4 Arline Peyton
5 Helen Eling
6 Stan Eling
7 Chris Morgan
8 Pauline Morgan
9 Paul Oldroyd
10 John Bird
11 Owen Whiteoak
12 Bruce Healey
13 Celia L Parsons
14 Howard Rosenblum
15 June McGaw
16 Steve Green
17 Colin Fine
18 Andy McIntyre
19 Paul R Dormer
20 Peter Mabey
21 Rob Jackson
22 Coral Jackson
23 David A Symes
24 Fay Symes
25 Margaret Austin
26 Margaret Draper
27 M J Walshe
28 ½r Cruttenden
29 Wendy Cruttenden
30 Edward Ward
31 Mike Llewellyn
32 Brian Ameringen
33 Paul Kincaid
34 Chris Wakelin
35 David Wakelin
36 Tim Illingworth
37 Alan Dorey
38 Ken Bulmer
39 Mike Damesick
41 Ian Maule
42 Joyce Mains
43 David Row
44 Rod Milner
45 Bonny Milner
46 Trevor Davis
47 Tina Davis
48 Martin Easterbrook
49 Ron Bennett
50 Andy Strangeways
51 Graham Charnock
52 Pat Charnock
53 John Steward
54 Kevin Smith
55 Brian Smith
56 Chris Smith
57 Vera Johnson
58 John Harvey
59 Eve Harvey
60 Liese Hoare
61 Martin Hoare
62 John Lowe
63 Stephen Davies
64 D G Gibson
65 Robert Swan
66 Vernon Brown
67 Bernard Peek
68 Lisanne Sutherland
69 Burn Burnett
70 Pat Baxter
71 Linda Hutchinson
72 Mike Hutchinson
73 Neil Moloney
74 Marcus Rowland
75 Philip Bernard
76 D West
77 Neil D Faulkner
78 Hazel C Faulkner
79 Al Fitzpatrick
81 Peter Baker
82 John A Crean
83 Dave Cox
84 Joyce Cluett
85 Dave Cluett
86 Hazel Langford
87 Dave Langford
88 Dermot Dobson
89 Mike Skelding
90 Steve Gould
91 Gerry Webb
92 Anne Keylock
93 Dave Thomas
94 Graham England
95 Keith Oborn
96 Krystyna Bula
97 Dave Lermit
98 Graeme Stillie
99 Linda Stillie
100 Bob Jewett
101 J Stewart
102 Darroll Pardoe
103 Rosemary Pardoe
104 Dave Ellis
105 Nellie Pardoel
106 Brian Hampton
107 Dave Holmes
108 Kathy Holmes
109 Ye Gerbish
110 Andrew Stephenson
111 Dai Price
112 Rob Hansen
113 Phil Dawson
114 Rory McLean
115 Paul Vincent
116 Jeff Hacker

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